

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Examiner's July 2, 2003, Official Action and respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above amendments and the following comments.

Claims 1-5 remain in the application for consideration.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakanishi '861 in view of Midgley '742. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection especially as applied against the claims as amended.

Nakanishi '861 fails to teach that a surface of gel material 410 is directly bonded to the periphery of racket grip as claimed by Applicant. Figure 3 and lines 23-27 of Nakanishi clearly teaches that gel material 410 fills the interior of a sheet 41 which is made in the shape of a tape. Accordingly, a surface of gel materials 410 cannot be directly bonded to the periphery of its racket handle, as claimed.

Further, there is no teaching in Nakanishi that sheet 41 is made of cloth formed from a non-woven fabric as claimed by Applicant. Review of Nakanishi does not reveal how or from what sheet 41 is made. However, after sheet 41 is wound around the Nakanishi racket, "a soft external covering sheet 42 such as, for example, leather or cloth (is) wound around said sheet 41" (See column 3, lines 17-22 of Nakanishi). The cloth 42 used in

Nakanishi is not shown to be made from a non-woven fabric, and the claimed invention clearly eliminates the need for this two step process when applying its tape, as the gel and cloth are directly engaged to each other at the time of manufacture.


With regard to Midgley, it teaches a tape having a plurality of grooves and ridges and not a single rib centered along the axis of the claimed tape which provides for a substantially uniform thickness of the tape when wound on a handle.

Applicant submits that the prior art combination clearly does not anticipate the structuring features of Applicant's invention as now claimed, and accordingly does not result in the functions provided by the structure claimed.

Applicant submits that the invention is new and unobvious and not disclosed by the cited art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully solicits the Examiner's early review and issuance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,  
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